

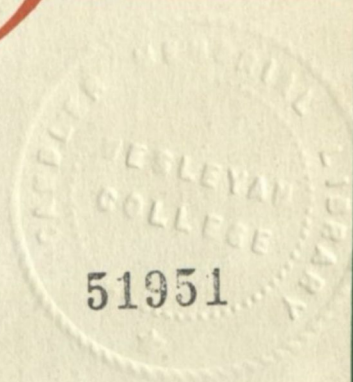
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CONTENTS

Staff:

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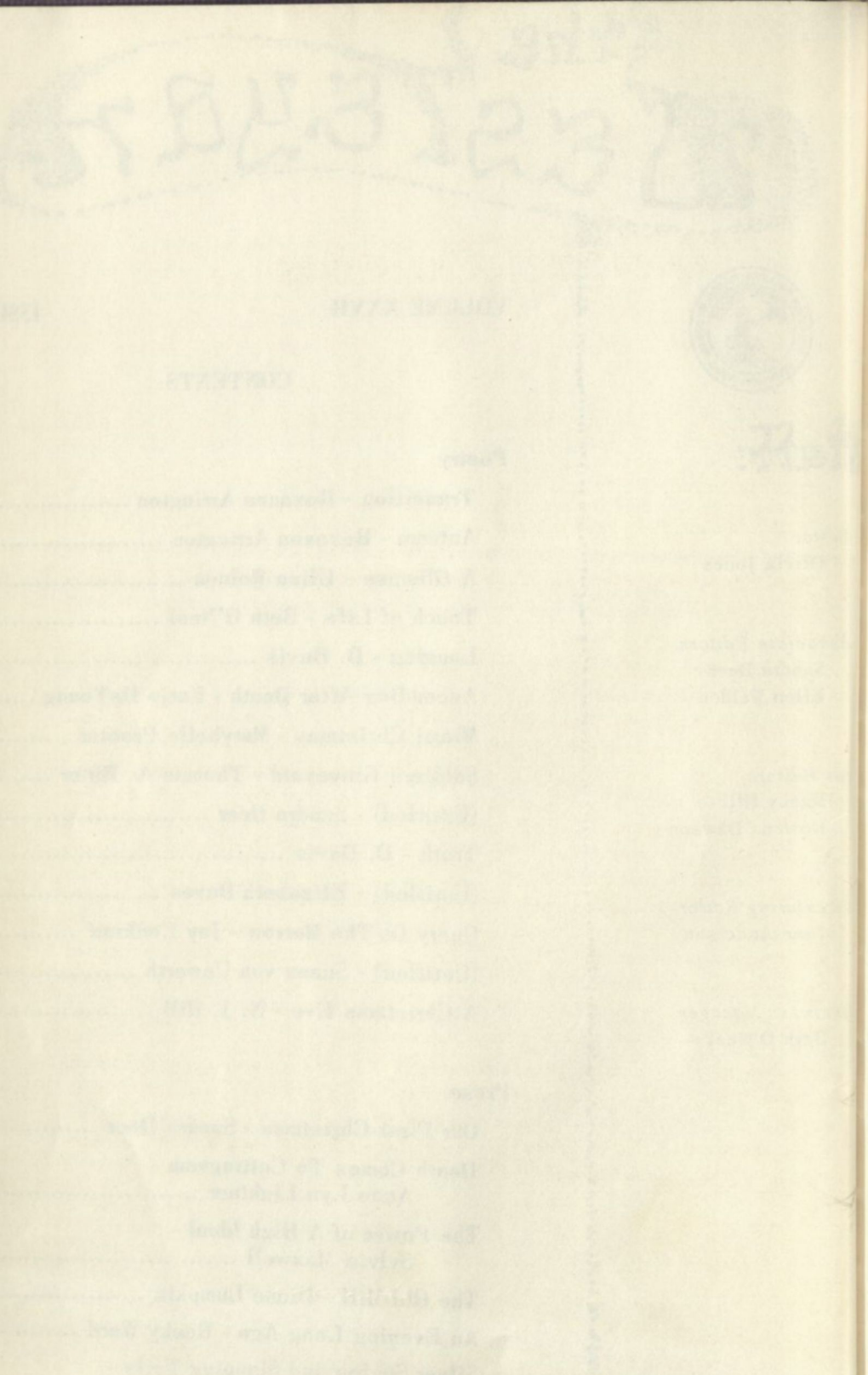
Beth O'Neal

Poetry

Transition - Roxanna Arrington	1
Autumn - Roxanna Arrington	1
A Glimpse - Ellen Weldon	1
Touch of Life - Beth O'Neal	1
Longing - D. Davis	1
Ascending After Death - Katje DeYoung	1
Miami Christmas - Marybelle Proctor	14
Soldiers Graveyard - Thomas A. Riner	1
(Untitled) - Sandra Deer	21
Truth - D. Davis	25
(Untitled) - Elizabeth Daves	24
Query On The Morrow - Joy Cochran	25
(Untitled) - Susan von Unwerth	25
A Christmas Eve - N. J. Hill	26

Prose

Our First Christmas - Sandra Deer	3
Death Comes To Cuttingham - Anne Lyn Lightner	4
The Power of A High Ideal - Sylvia Maxwell	10
The Old Mill - Diane Lumpkin	15
An Evening Long Ago - Becky Ward	18
Silver Scales and Slapping Tails - Eva Turpin	22



Our First Christmas

By Sandra Deer

There is a beauty unique in itself that belongs to "firsts" — First word, first day at school, first prom, first kiss, first love. But a "first" that has been remembered through the years and has enriched our hearts as we have grown older, was our first Christmas together.

The little spruce tree we so carefully selected, simply refused to stand quite straight, and to this day I have a kind of sneaky criminal feeling whenever I open a closet during the gift season. Remember that tremendous turkey I baked for just the two of us. You got so tired of turkey sandwiches in your lunch.

We stayed up almost half the night playing Christmas music and just looking at each other and being so peacefully happy and so in love. We talked about another Christmas couple that lived two thousand years ago, and about the dirty little child on the sidewalk down town. You said you wondered if by next Christmas there would still be only two in our family, and I blushed a little, keeping my own sacred little secret. We got up to turn off the lights, and neither of us could bring ourselves to touch the switch that controlled the Christmas tree. We stood for a moment, looking down at the manger scene on the coffee table. You squeezed my hand, and for some reason I wanted to cry. This was our first Christmas together, and I wanted to keep it; never let it be over, but as I heard the carolers down the street and watched you bend down to replace the miniature shepherd who had fallen over, I knew that this was the first of many happy Christmases for us — Christmas touched by illness, depression, even war, but no matter where we were forced to be, we were together at Christmas.

How many have there been now, my dear? I seem to lose count from year to year. Forty-seven, forty-nine? They have been good Christmases though, haven't they? Still, as the season begins every year, my first thoughts always wander back many years to a little flat and a crooked tree and a plash-shepherd who couldn't stand up.

Death Comes To Cuttingham

By Anne Lyn Lightner

Ereck Wall stepped to the door of his feed store and looked out. Squinting at the blinding sunlight outside, he tried shading his eyes with his hand. He propped himself against the side of the doorway and stood there idly biting on a straw.

"Town seems pretty quiet this morning, doesn't it?" remarked an old man who was sitting back in a chair that he had propped on two legs against the wall.

"Yea, Mondays usually are dull around here," replied another who was sitting lazily on some feed bags piled on the sidewalk outside the store.

Wall, still biting on the straw, stepped down to the sidewalk, and sat on the one step leading into his store. Just as he sat down, the delivery boy for the corner grocery stopped his bicycle with a sudden halt before the three men.

"Hi, Ronnie," Wall greeted the boy. "Where ya coming from in such a hurry?"

"Oh, I just took a few things to Old Mrs. Periwinkle up on the hill there. Before I could get away she stopped me and started filling me with more of her stupid ole predictions. I just had to stand there and listen and listen and try to be nice. But its awfully hard with all the nonsense she carries on."

"What is it this time, Ronnie?" asked Stephen Hatfield, the one seated on the feed bags.

"Yes, you must know this one." Ronald answered in a rather provoked tone. "There's going to be a death and real soon."

Wall looked up smiling at the disgusted lad, "And just why is that?"

"Just because Old Lady Periwinkle dreamed of a wedding last night. Man, she was full of it. She said I should let everyone know that someone's about to die or be killed just so it won't shock the town too much."

"Ah, I see," replied the old man, letting the chair fall on all fours. "Well, someone ought to take her a newspaper — there's always a death column a mile long. It's too bad that —"

"No, sir," interrupted Ronald, still quite disgusted. "Mrs. Periwinkle says its to be in this very town because the wedding was in this town."

"Now don't let it get under your skin so, Ronnie," advised Wall. "Mrs. Periwinkle's just a superstitious old lady, and she'll forget this in a day or so. Just don't pay too much attention to her."

But Ereck Wall was wrong, for Old Mrs. Periwinkle didn't forget. And she stayed "full of it" as Ronald had said.

Mrs. Periwinkle lived in this small town of Cuttingham, Georgia, with a population of about eight hundred. She had known that town all of her eighty-one years, and for the past sixty-three years she had lived in the big frame house that stood on the top of the hill overlooking the town. She had been left a widow at an early age with five small sons to care for, and she had raised them all to fine young men. Then one by one they had gone their own way and had left her to herself. Now she had outlived them all, for each of them had died or had been killed. With the death of her last son Mrs. Periwinkle had experienced a great loneliness and had lived in this state ever since. Often when she was by herself, her mind would fall into long lapses of wonderings and imaginings, but indeed this was natural for her mind had been her only company. Now she was extremely superstitious and became quite peeved when others failed to look upon things as she did.

As Ronald was leaving, Mrs. Periwinkle hobbled outside and stood in her yard watching him as he rapidly peddled his bicycle down the hill. Suppose it's that young lad that dies, thought the old lady shuddering. Who will it be? She stood there gazing at the idle town, apprehension about to get the best of her. She turned around and began fumbling with her flowers. But her dream was so vivid in her mind that she could think of nothing else. She looked around for someone to talk to, and became quite irritated when she saw no one. Why, she asked herself, couldn't Anna be here today? Anna was the colored girl who had cared for Mrs. Periwinkle every day since her heart attack three years before. That day, however, Anna had gone to the country to look after her sister who had recently become quite ill.

The sun was high overhead, so Mrs. Periwinkle hobbled back into her house and began looking around the kitchen for something to eat. After nibbling a little cereal (she now depended on Anna for her meals), she went into her bedroom for her usual nap, but she could not rest. She just knew some one in town would die that day, and she didn't want to be closed inside those old walls where she would not know what was going on. She hobbled back outside and sat in a comfortable chair that was under the shade of a great magnolia tree. It was a beautiful peaceful spring day. The air was fresh from the rain the night before and held a delicately fragrant odor from the blossoms that filled the land. Old Mrs. Periwinkle, however, was not in harmony with nature, for her mind was in great discord with the beauty and peacefulness of the land.

She of course was thinking of her dream the night before and badly wanted to tell the town about it. Maybe that delivery boy (she couldn't think of his name) would spread the news, but she didn't really trust those town people. Even if they did know, they probably wouldn't give it another thought. Oh, if Anna were only here, she thought, she would believe. Anna always had thought like her mistress. Mrs. Periwinkle gripped the arms of her chair tightly, then let go her hold and relaxed a moment. But she could not stand this endless waiting. She gripped the chair again and pulled herself to a standing position. When was she going to hear of a death? Why couldn't it hurry up and happen so that this awful fact would no longer be hanging over

her? Why wasn't Anna there so that she could share this agony with her? Mrs. Periwinkle sat back down abruptly and quite wearily.

She thought of her dream again—it was as real to her as if she had just sat through that wedding in her waking life. She could see their faces now, Tom Sander's son marrying that Bartley girl, and she could see the church in all of its simple loveliness. She felt as if some great evil hung over her because she had dreamed that dream. Now she wanted to get it away from her; she felt as if she could not stand to wait any longer. Never once did Mrs. Periwinkle doubt that she would hear of a death and that it would be in Cuttingham because the wedding had been. But why should she doubt it? Hadn't she read books and articles of queer things that happened to people? Hadn't she seen in her long life all those sayings of people come true? Hadn't Samuel Carter been taken deathly ill when he had fish and milk together? Hadn't the Flanders' boy fallen off of the roof of his chicken house shortly after crossing under a ladder? Hadn't Christine Powers had bad things constantly happening to her for many years after she had broken her big dresser mirror? Yes, sir, Mrs. Periwinkle had read that certain things like that brought hardships to people. And, most important to her, hadn't her youngest son been killed on a Friday the thirteenth by a bolt of lightning? Tears filled the old lady's eyes but did not stay there long. Her poor old mind was too full of her dream and its ultimate prediction to even think of anything else.

Mrs. Periwinkle spent the rest of the afternoon with that endless waiting—and watching—and listening—and still waiting bearing upon her. Anna returned in the early evening and Mrs. Periwinkle pounced upon her. Right away she told Anna all about the dream and requested that she walk down the hill to see if she could find out any news, and Anna faithfully did as she was told. Mrs. Periwinkle knew that Anna would want to know too if anyone had died or was about to die. Anna returned with no news at all. Trying to get her mistress' mind off of the dream for awhile, she fed her her dinner and tucked her in bed early.

This, however, did not quiet old Mrs. Periwinkle's mind. She was extremely tired, and the bed felt good to her, but she could not sleep—she did not want to. She lay still and listened and listened to the endless ticking of the Grandfather clock that was against the wall in her room. Her thoughts were endless too, keeping in rhythm with the tick of the clock. At times she would become extremely irritated and would toss and turn. Then once again her thoughts would get back with the rhythm of the clock. She spent a sleepless night, her imaginings of who would die forever keeping her awake.

Anna came in the next morning to help her dress. "Anna," Mrs. Periwinkle greeted the girl, "run down the hill right away and see who died last night."

"Yes'm, I will, Mrs. Periwinkle, but fust let me fix you some breakfast."

"No, Anna, go right this minute. Someone died last night, and I must know who it was right now. I can't stand this not knowing anything." While

Anna was gone, Mrs. Periwinkle sat stiffly in the kitchen waiting, waiting for Anna to bring her back the news, waiting to hear of the death. Anna returned, however, saying that there had been no death at all. So Mrs. Periwinkle was forced to spend another day like the previous one. But this time Mrs. Periwinkle had Anna to keep her company, and she nearly drove the poor colored girl out of her wits. She kept her constantly running to town to find out the news. She kept her constantly listening to the dream and to her thoughts as to who would die. She kept making Anna guess who would be the one to die and when and how. In fact, Old Mrs. Periwinkle was getting quite out of hand. It was getting more than Anna could do to look after her.

Tuesday finally drew to a close as Monday had done. Mrs. Periwinkle lay in her bed, again afraid to go to sleep, and again thinking and wishing for morning so that she could hear who had died. The old clock was keeping up its steady rhythm ticking away the hour. Old Mrs. Periwinkle's imaginings kept ticking away, too, but gradually they died down. Her mind finally became quiet for the first time since her dream two nights before. The steady ticking of the clock continued by itself.

About the middle of the morning Wednesday, Stephen Hatfield stuck his head in the door of the feed store and called to Wall. "Ereck, come to the door here, quick."

Wall stepped from behind some bags at the rear of the store and hurried to the door. "Look down the street there, going into the funeral home," directed Hatfield.

Wall took one look and exclaimed, "My God, the old lady must have been right. Who is that they are carrying in there?"

"I don't know," Hatfield replied, "Probable some old fellow that killed hisself from too much drink. Look, there's Anna right there finding out the news to take back to Old Mrs. Periwinkle. You know, it's really a shame that she had to be right about someone dying. Now she will never...but come on Ereck, let's walk over and find out about it,"

As the two neared the funeral home, they heard some lady remarking to another. "Wonder who will get the big old house. All her sons died long..."

"What!" Wall suddenly interrupted. "You mean that was Old Mrs. Periwinkle they just carried in there?"

"Good Morning, Mr. Wall," said the lady. "Yes, that's Old Mrs. Periwinkle."

"Well what on earth happened to her—I mean, what caused her death?" Wall quickly asked.

"Mamie and I were just discussing that," replied the lady. "We don't know. It must have been another heart attack. Anyway, Anna found her dead in her bed this morning."

Transition

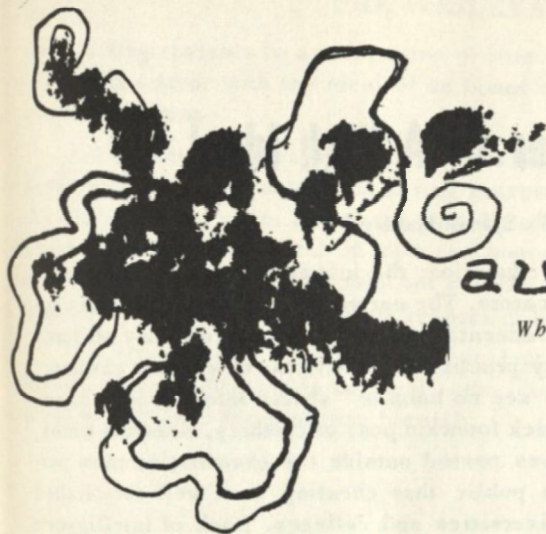
TRANSITION

*Autumnal God of the season of harvest
Who lies in the hills 'neath a blanket
Of mist ----
Spread wide your arms and
Embrace all Nature with a kiss that makes even
The trees turn red
With blushing sweetness*

*Take the chilling breeze to your
Bosom
And warm it again with the breath
Of eager passion*

*Leave the aged virgin---Summer
Chase
Winter in her crystal gown
To the brink of Autumn's realm
And there lie together on the bed of
Nature's fulfillment
Whispering
Icy
Promises of love-----*

Roxanna Arrington



autumn

What Autumn is/

*a crackling sound, a
shade of brown,
a tumbling down
a hymn of praise, an
ear of maize,
a woodsy haze*

What Autumn is/

*a college class, a
catholic mass,
a football pass
a fuzzy sock, a
ticking clock,
a busy dock*

Autumn is/

*a grey sky, a
pumpkin pie,
a drink of rye
a leopard spot, a
horse trot,
an empty lot*

Autumn is/

*a hunting gun, a
golden sun,
a prayerful nun
a full moon, a
mournful tune,
a big balloon*

Autumn/

*a cup of tea, a
red tree,
a skinned knee
a mountain path, a
cold bath,
an after-math*

The Power Of A High Ideal

By Sylvia Maxwell

A stigma taints American education; the infamy of it must be borne by every American as well as educators. The nature of the problem becomes apparent in the graphic reports of educators and journalists. Too many students regard cheating as a necessary practice. Not only do they admit cheating, but they acknowledge that they see no harm in "shared information." Examination answers concealed in trick fountain pens or clothing, elaborate codes, and henchmen with field glasses posted outside the examination room persuade the skeptical American public that cheating is a well-established practice in some American universities and colleges. Lack of intelligence does not explain these students' dependence upon the crutch of cheating, for the majority of the students in higher education are well-bred, wholesome youth. Is America so enamored with success that she would renounce the ideals of a great and invincible nation rather than the goal of security? How long does a nation of "cheaters" remain invincible?

The dignity of American scholarship must be reaffirmed. This task demands the unsurpassed dedication of every student who enters an institution of higher learning. A college or university where living is based upon the honor pledge exemplifies a community of unsurpassed dedication — dedication to an ideal.

For the graduate of the small high school, an honor system is a new experience. Of course he was aware of honor in high school — it influenced his actions to some extent. Though papers were passed and questions discussed around him when examinations began, he never quite accepted cheating with the callous indifference of many of his classmates. The basic principle of the honor system he encounters in college is such an acceptance of responsibility for individual actions. Yet the college student experiences another concept of honor infinitely more important than doing one's own work on an examination. By example and influence, he guides a weaker classmate to experience the power of an ideal. New to his experience is this integral ideal of the honor pledge — compassion.

Despite the successful incorporation of the honor system in many colleges and universities, the advocates of practicability contest its worth. Although ideals can result in action, they are powerless in themselves. The critics of the honor system ask, "Does the honor system ever actually catch a student failing to uphold its ideals? Where is proof of its practicability?" Thus they contend that the honor system is the plan of an idealist and is feasible only in a Utopian society. But those who have lived in an atmosphere permeated by the ideals of the honor system refute this argument. The honor ideal is not condemnation of failure. Its practicability is its concern

with guiding students to a recognition of true value. Condemnation is, therefore, inconsistent with the ideal of an honor system. Compassion is its implement of action.

Acceptance of the honor ideal as a student is an acknowledgment of the dignity of the mind of man. Once having grasped the ideal of honor in school, the student would never thwart the purpose of his mind — to know truth. He would not replace this ideal of truth and honor with the lesser goals of security and conformity. He would not become the ultimate destroyer of his self-respect and subsequently, his respect of others.

The honor system which guides a student's life is his own throughout his life — his dedication to an ideal — the ideal that to keep the mind from blemish is to keep the soul from blemish.

A Glimpse

Here comes big brother

Swinging a pail along

*His mouth is pursed in a whistle
And his hands in pockets are thrust
As he strides along so carefree.
So casual and jaunty and bold.*

Trailing behind is kid brother

Arms stacked up with cane poles

*With an old red cap to his ears,
And a smudged wrinkled shirt tail out,
He trudges forward on stubby legs,
So serious and radiantly important.*

On the path they go,

Past tangled and marshy land.

Into the grey dusk of twilight;

Just a glimpse and gone

Ellen Weldon



Touch Of Life

TOUCH OF LIFE

*Pasted smile upon a plastic face,
Flaxen hair sewed in the skull,
Gingham dress and snap-on shoes,
Sitting with one leg askew,
Waiting for her infant mother
To touch her and give her life.*

Beth O'Neal

Longing

*The autumn rain has ceased.
Feet ache to retrace steps
Through spring streams filled with Bream;
Meadows topped with morning
Light; and woods trimmed grey-green.*

*The spring shower slackens.
Feet step on still damp earth.
Fall's wind quickens senses
To ice not yet formed;
Hickory burning brightly;
And anticipant leaves
Rotting dull red and brown.*

D. Davis

Ascending After Death

*The roads become strips of concrete strings;
The trees——blended branches on a distant bush;
The fields——checks in my grandmother's afgan;
The once distant clouds become puffs of
 cottony-smoke, now within reach.
As I move my arm, I am horrified to touch
 and feel them.
Through the woolpack of tangible moisture,
I look for the last time at the now
opaque world.*

Katje DeYoung



*Bright sun warm on beige beach.....
Sky-line of tropical metropolis.....
Florida sunset silhouette - tall palms -
Holiday shoppers stroll in gay bermudas.....
Back-yard avocados with Christmas turkey.....
Poinsettias grow beside hibiscus.*

THE OLD MILL

By Diane Lumpkin

As fiery flames leaped from the fiercely burning structure, a horrified crowd stood within the roped-off area. Anxiously they watched as one worker after another walked or was carried from the burning inferno. With the exit of each man from the mill, a muffled sigh or joyous cry escaped from the lips of a relieved relative. Within moments, the drawn faces of the onlookers and the shocked faces of the survivors were changed into faces which expressed relief and thankfulness as all workers emerged safely from the building — all except one.

At the edge of the crowd stood a black-haired, olive-complexioned woman of about thirty. Her expression was not one of relief, but one of anguish: her husband, the mill owner, had not been located. Survivors recounted that the mill owner had helped them to safety; the last survivor to have left the building remembered that the owner had been checking to see if all workers were out of the burning building. Then, the roof had fallen.

Only charred ruins remained where a large mill had once stood. As the firemen searched through the rubble, they came upon one of the steel beams which had supported the roof. Upon lifting the beam, the firemen were stunned by a horrifying sight: underneath the beam was a small charred remnant of a man's suit and four crushed fingers which had been severed at the knuckles by the falling beam. Closer inspection revealed a gold ring — a gold wedding band — lying beside the beam. Inside the ring was the inscription: L. A. H. and B. R. S. 9-26-45. The mill owner, Lindsey Howard, had been found. His dazed wife, Bernice, could not speak or move; this day was their fifth wedding anniversary, this day of the tragic fire.

Five years passed. During this time, the site of the old mill became the possession of weeds and wild shrubs. Only a few stones remained to show to passers-by that a structure had once stood amidst what was now rubble and nature. Yet the townspeople needed no visible objects to remind them of the mill or its heroic owner. The mill workers still recounted the courageous deeds of their valorous Mr. Howard to their children; each year, on September 26, the townspeople cleaned Mr. Howard's burial plot and placed flowers on his grave. Yet, while telling the story about Mr. Howard, the people wondered: Strange how Bernice Howard had left so suddenly after her husband's death, never to have been heard from again.

Along the streets of the mill town walked an attractive woman, about thirty-five years of age, who had dazzling red hair. The strange lady stopped at the real estate office, went inside, and presently reappeared, carrying an official-looking paper. Talk was prevalent, and rumors circulated about the visitor, for newcomers were scarce in this small mill town.

During the next week, feverish activity was conducted at the site of the old mill. Bulldozers cleared the ground of rubble and weeds; workmen arrived, and construction began. Presently an imposing brick home was completed; the former site of the mill was no longer desolate.

Speculation as to the new owners was the topic of all conversation. Surprise, astonishment, and wonder filled each person when the owner moved into her new home: it was the red-haired stranger who had recently walked down Main Street and into the realty office.

The stranger's home soon became the gathering place of the men of the town. Her beauty, charm, and gracious hospitality were eagerly and greedily sought by the male population; they could talk of no one or nothing else. Their wives, mothers, and sweethearts vainly hunted the men, yet each woman knew where all males could be located. To the men, no one could surpass the mysterious stranger; to the women, no one was lower or more intensely disliked than the red-haired lady.

It was the 26th of September, five years after the mill had burned. The townspeople made their annual visit to Mr. Howard's grave, to pay their respects to the heroic mill owner. Upon arriving at the cemetery and the Howard's plot, the citizens were shocked into a fearful and speechless silence: adjacent to Mr. Howard's grave was a hole, a hole that was large enough for a casket. At the head of this large, empty hole was a monument with the epitaph:

Bernice Roberta Stevenson Howard
beloved wife of Lindsey Andrew Howard

Born: January 8, 1920

Died: September 26, 1955

As the people of the town apathetically stood by the burial site, smoke began drifting through the trees and pervaded the atmosphere. The sharp smell of smoke and burning materials awoke the people from their stupor and to reality.

Racing from the cemetery, the citizens sped towards the source of the smoke. Suddenly they saw that the smoke was coming from the red-haired stranger's home at the old mill. Quickening their pace, they dashed for the house.

From the smouldering remains of the once-imposing home, three firemen emerged, carrying a stretcher on which lay a lifeless form. They had saved the home from complete destruction, but the firemen and townspeople had been unable to prevent the red-haired lady's suffocating.

On the stretcher lay the woman who had created a sensational turmoil in a small town. Her red hair had been charred by the flames until it was dark black in color; soot and smoke had given her complexion an olive tone, yet the spectators identified her as the stranger by a small scar which was above her left eyebrow. Something about the now dark-haired, olive-complexioned woman was familiar. What was it? Where had they seen her before?

As the firemen carried the woman's body to the waiting ambulance, someone noticed a gold ring — a gold wedding band — on the lady's right hand. Thinking that it might be a clue to the strange woman's true identity or background, a townswoman removed the ring. Amazed people read the inscription which was on the inside of the ring: L.A.H. and B.R.S. 9-26-45.

Soldiers Graveyard

I am the graveyard of battlefield soldiers.....

I am the death bed of fighters.....

I am the resting place of scared men who fight each other.....

I am the receiver of the torn and mangled.....

*I hold in my bosom the coward who was shot in the back
and I hold the coward who shot him from ambush.....*

*I hold the hero who was machine-gunned, and I hold the machine
gunner who was killed by the hero's last-strength shot.....*

*I hold the invader and the defender,
the right and the wrong,
the right and the more right,
the wrong and the more wrong.....*

I hold the quick dead and the slow dead.....

*I hold those who never knew they became dead, and I hold those
who knew they would become dead.....*

I hold the leader and the led.....

*I hold men who fought and men who prayed and men who mended and
men who knew that.....*

*I hold men who were blind, (though does anyone see) to the cause of
the battle.....*

*I hold all these, and for them all,
I weep and mourn.....*

An Evening Long Ago

By Becky Ward

I shall never forget the sickening terror that gripped me on that night. Many years have passed since then, but each time I remember the cold blade of the knife against my flesh I relive that horrible nightmare.

I had been invited to an informal soiree by M. and Mme Lebrun, who very rarely entertained formally. Shortly before the hour of eight, I arrived a bit nervous and apprehensive, I must confess, at attending my first party in Paris. Only recently I had come from Germany to fulfil a long burning desire to live in France, to savor her beauties and delights. I was soon made to feel at ease by my host and hostess, and after chatting with me for some time, they prevailed upon me to play the piano for the group. At that time I was fairly well known in Germany for my concerts, but not outside my homeland.

I chose a difficult Bach fugue which was quite unfamiliar to most of these Frenchmen. However, I soon lost myself in it, looking up only when I had completed the piece. I was quite startled to find a young woman of exquisite face and form staring intensely at me, as if to memorize every feature, every line, every curve in the mold of my face. Taken aback by the deep blue of her eyes which perused me, by the delicate curve of small nose, the half smile which played about her lips, the magnificent wealth of black hair piled on her head, I could only stare in return. She broke the silence.

"That was a brilliant performance, Monsieur...."

"Erik Heider." I managed to rise and to add as an afterthought, "Thank you."

She said, "I have never heard Bach played with such clarity and by one with such ability".

"Oh, so you are familiar with his works?"

She smiled. "Shall we say that I've merely heard some of him on occasion. You are new here, in Paris, Heider?"

"Yes, I've just been a fortnight. I'm from Heidelberg, but I hope to remain in France for some time. Perhaps give concerts or even teach. And if all Paris is half as lovely as you, I know I shall enjoy my stay."

Her eyes were filled with laughter as she demurely lowered her head. "And now it is my turn to thank you, M. Heider."

We talked for much of the evening, sometimes drifting into conversations with other guests, but always returning to each other's company. We had hardly anything in common but our youth, and yet we were never at a loss for

words. I learned that her name was Helene Dumont, that Paris is her loveliest after a light spring shower; I learned about the Paris theater and opera, and I learned that Mlle Dumont was the most enchanting and charming creature whom I had ever met. And yet, as I look back, I can remember looking up suddenly several times to find her eyes fixed upon me with a strange and troubled expression. However, at the time I was too fascinated to care-

I was so overwhelmed by her beauty that I must have taken leave of my senses, else I should not have offered my carriage to an acquaintance, Andre. Having recently recovered from a fever, he was still weak, and soon after the hour of ten, he began to feel ill. I begged him to take my carriage, which I had ordered for ten thirty. Although he refused at first, he looked so pale that I insisted, and finally succeeded in making him do as I wished.

Since I had no desire to leave the delightful company of Mlle. Dumont so soon, I told my coachman that I would not be ready to leave for another hour. Alas for my scheming and planning! Mlle. Dumont left the party almost immediately after Andre, saying that she too was feeling tired and ill. Now that she was gone, I had no particular reason for wanting to remain in the company of semi-strangers for another hour, and so I too took leave of my host and hostess within a half hour, having decided to walk the short distance to my home.

I must have lost my mind entirely, for even though it was such a short walk, it is not safe for anyone but the lowest scum of the streets to be alone at that late hour.

As I walked away from the Lebrun home, I was suddenly chilled by the cool night air, and the ghostly clouds passing over the face of the pale, sickly yellow moon seemed as ominous warnings. I was filled with an acute sense of panic. I reproached myself for being so cowardly and set forth at a brisk pace. Oh, if only I had listened to my inner feelings and had returned to the party!

The mist, rising low over the river which separated me from my home, hovered around the dimly lit street lamps, making them appear vague and indefinite in shape. My footsteps sounded as if they were striking a hollow surface. In the distance a dog uttered a long, mournful cry, just as his wild ancestors had been wont to gather in packs and howl at the moon. Except for these sounds, all was as still as death, and this stillness had such an effect on me so as to drive me half out of my mind with fear.

This feeling was only intensified when I became aware of footsteps behind me. I am not certain when I first heard them; perhaps they echoed in my subconscious mind before I was fully aware of them. At first I tried to chide myself for being so apprehensive, but still that cold fear remained inside me like a lead weight which dragged all hope from my heart. I could not convince myself that I was not being pursued. I stopped; so did the footsteps. I started walking - slowly, now faster, now slowly again. The footsteps adopted my every change of pace.

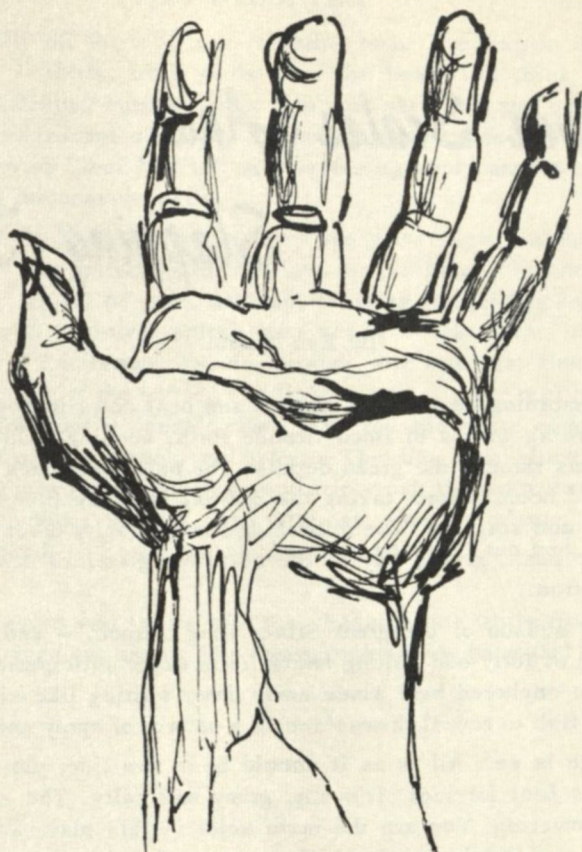
Suddenly I heard the crisp clatter of horses' hooves — a carriage. My heart beat wildly in a frenzy of hope. The carriage came toward me, over the bridge, and I longed to leap out in front of it, to stop it, to escape from the footsteps. But I could not move. I was afraid to do anything but walk on and on, while it passed me, leaving me destitute and hopeless.

When the carriage disappeared, the steps increased their rapidity and began to come nearer to me. I too quickened my step, and although I was not yet halfway across the bridge, in my terror I started to run, to try to flee from my unknown pursuer. As he drew yet nearer to me, I fancied that his were the steps of a messenger sent by Fate from the grim, foreboding halls of his castle, and in one last desperate effort to escape from this unknown phantom I quickly turned, prepared to fight him.

A tall man, whose features were barely visible in the pale moonlight, stood before me, almost completely enveloped in a great black cloak, so close that I could feel his breath upon me. His arm moved so swiftly that when I saw the glittering metal of the knife he held in his hand, I had scarce enough time to whirl away and so to avoid a fatal wound. I can still feel the cold metal tearing through my side, followed by the wave of intense, searing pain. I jerked my head up toward his face, and for the first time his eyes rested upon mine. A look of unspeakable horror passed over his face. He staggered backwards a few steps, crying out, "My God, it's not the spy! Helene, how could you have made such a mistake! They'll kill me, they'll..." He broke off as I fell, then turned and fled, fading into the vast darkness about me.

It seemed that I screamed for help forever, although it was merely a few seconds. I passed into the realm of unconsciousness, awakening only after I had been carried to a surgeon's home by my coachman, who had been returning over the bridge to the home of M. and Mme Lebrun and had heard my screams, only seconds too late to help me.

Thirty years have come and gone, and I have not many years of my life left for me. But neither time nor events can erase my memory — the memory of that night.



*Last night I lay in bed
and tried to bore a hole in the sky
with my toe.*

*I wanted to take my fingernail
And scratch the shine off a star.*

*I spit on the moon
To see if it would melt.
It wouldn't.*

*I grabbed hold of one star
And tried to swing to another.
My arms were a little short.*

*I tried to pray to a God
But my voice was too weak
To yell so loud.
Maybe someday I'll learn
To quit trying impossible things.
Maybe someday I'll grow up.*

Silver Scales And Slapping Tails

By Eva Turpin

The mid-morning heat of the August sun beat down in pounding layers upon the churning waters of Boca Grande Pass, sending light rays in continuous streams through the green depths. The pale, pink hues of the dawning have faded hours before, taking the morning moisture from the air. Now, it is hot, dry, and stagnant. The refreshing smell of salty breezes have suddenly left the pass, giving way to the suffocating odor of dead fish, beer, and suntan lotion.

It is the season of the great Silver King Tarpon, — and here in this pass, a circle of forty-odd fishing boats lie in eager anticipation. The hunters have been anchored here since early dawn waiting like silent vultures for the silver fish to reveal themselves in a shower of spray and foam.

The stage is set. All is as it should be in low tide, pin fish for bait, and a rabbit's foot for luck. It's hot, grimy and salty. The smell of dead bait is overpowering. You are the main actor in this play, and so you sit there in the huge fighting chair, still, tense, and waiting — waiting for the slightest movement from the red and white cork bobbing and drifting lazily in passive motion with the reddish-green sea grass. The cork seems nonchalant of the activity going on above and below the surface.

Your hand tightens on the ten foot pole as you peer out from behind sunglasses and a battered straw hat into the glaring sunlight. How long have you sat here in the broiling sun — two, three hours? It really makes no difference; you're here to do battle with a fish that will probably out-weigh you, out-fox you, and out-fight you before the day is over. Might as well be patient.

The white sea-gulls circle and glide gracefully above your head, occasionally swooping to catch a thrown morsel of fish. You glance upward to watch their silhouettes against the cloud speckled sky and you hear thin high screeching, echoing through the dryness.

And then it comes, a sudden, frightening jerk, — no, it's more of a grasp that pulls at your arm sockets with steady strength. Your toes bite into the foot support, teeth clench, arms straighten and you arch backward with all the leverage your body can afford. The hook is set. The red and white cork has disappeared beneath the surface now, and is running parallel to the boat about three feet under water. There's no stopping that line as it

spins frantically off the reel in a vibrating hum. The Tarpon is making his desperate run — thirty, forty yards from the boat. The thick pole is bent double and the leather harness bites into your shoulder; and now a prankster performs the traditional ceremony of throwing ice-cubes down your sweaty shirt. As cries of "reel him in" are deafening your ears, you strain even harder against the unseen enemy.

Now all hell breaks loose as the huge silver form breaks the surface and leaps from the protecting depths into the sunlight — bright scales glistening. Higher, higher he goes, arching, twisting and jerking in mid-air only to fall back with a violent splash that sends a light spray of salty water upon your face. Excitement pounds through your muscles; time and senses are lost to the fury of the battle. You tighten, and grip the reel handle awaiting the next jolt, but it doesn't come. The red and white cork bobs to the surface and floats passively as before. The line lies slack in the clam greenness of the water. You relax your grip, push the worn straw hat back, release the shoulder harness, and sigh as someone places a refreshing drink in your hand, and pats you on the head saying, "too bad, maybe next time —".

The boat roaks and sways with the changing tide while from across the circle the cry rings out again, "By damn, look at that baby fly! Reel'er in!"

TRUTH

*The heart, securely circumscribed and linked
By the soul, serves as womb and origin
Of the delicate tendrils of instinct
Which seek, touch, and entwine the genuine
core of truth.*

*The quick filaments are activated
By a perturbation of falsity
Sending tremors throughout the being.
The activity dislodges pretense:
emotion embraces truth.*



*"All things have rest, why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things"*

Thompson

*Sleepily swaying grain, bowing in the breeze,
And pinkish-purple primroses, their faces full of
Nod and bend with each gentle blow,
To us Masters of the World as off we go,
To sweat and toil for naught but our death.*

*Rulers are we of earth and its store?
By thought and intellect we claim the throne,
Yet sweat is out to be and our scepter a hoe,
And off to the fields of labor we go,
While a primrose just laughs---and turns its face to*

Query On The Morrow

What holds the morrow?

No man knows; not one, this earthly life afords!

For lowly earthlings such as we

Have not the ears for hidden chords.

Ah, yesterday seems far away

And strange, to think I might have known, e'en then,

The happenings which came today!

What holds the morrow?

Will that which I shall come to know

Be pleasant, sweet, sad, small or great?

Such query this, the dawn will show.

Joy Cochran

What makes people want to please

Although they won't admit it?

What makes people fear to live

Although they don't admit it?

What makes people distrust their God

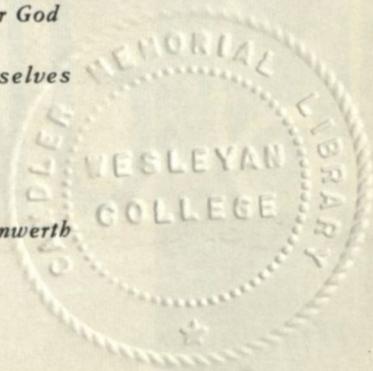
Although they can't admit it?

What makes people dislike themselves

And revel in admitting it?

What makes people fools?

Susan vonUnwerth



A Christmas Eve

*Swish the covers aside
Ease with silent wonder
Onto the cold, cold floor
And into ball of inky dark.
Shaft of light patterns the wall,
Murmurs of warmth and softness
Press and recede from the dim room
ahead.
Just a peek
into the unseen.
Dawn will never come
Day an eternity away.
Flecks of tinsel and beckoning color
Dance before wide, wide eyes.
Oh.....h.....the glitter, the loveliness
.....Away he flies
into the soft, deep covers
To lie breathless and thrilled
and pleased.*

N. J. Hill

